

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Harbor Industries Inc.

Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center

Harbor Industries, Inc. Achieves Sustainability with Services Provided by MMTC

Client Profile:

Harbor Industries manufactures custom point-of-purchase displays, fixtures, and digital media solutions. The family-owned business employs 200 people at its facility in Grand Haven, Michigan.

Situation:

Harbor Industries began a concerted effort to evaluate and change the way the company and its products impacted the environment through the triple bottom line business model. The company contacted the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (CMTTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

MMTC transformed the company's aspirations into business strategies and practices through MMTC-West's Sustainable Manufacturing User Group (SMUG). SMUG was created to assist West Michigan manufacturers address the increasing demand for 'green' or environmentally sustainable products and services from Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and OEM suppliers. The group provides a roadmap to identify and develop innovative products and processes by utilizing emerging sustainable manufacturing technologies and techniques. Committed to promoting sustainable business practices, Harbor began incorporating eco-friendly raw materials into production, investing in innovative technologies; establishing waste reduction and recycling programs; and developing outreach and education programs for stakeholders. Ultimately, the organization's goal was to become a climate neutral, zero-waste company. "Our priority is to put environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of our business while managing economic growth," stated Bob Johnson, Harbor Industries' Senior Designer. "The advantage of reducing our impact affects more than the bottom line for the company; it will strengthen our communities, improve the environment, and protect our future." Knowing that any good strategy requires metrics, the company developed a set of business metrics based on the triple bottom line model of economic impact, environmental impact, and social impact. As a first step in their sustainable business journey, Harbor Industries chose to evaluate overall annual sales as their key performance indicator for economic impact. Implementing sustainable business practices through the triple bottom line business model has enabled Harbor to remain competitive and now consistently outperform industry peers.

Harbor Industries tracks five distinct environmental aspects in evaluating the company's overall environmental impact: electricity, natural gas, and water usage; waste to landfill and material recycled; and greenhouse gas emissions. In developing their triple bottom line strategy, Harbor Industries chose to focus their social impact in three main areas: education, volunteering, and financial contributions. Education priorities were dedicated to providing learning opportunities for Harbor employees on sustainability, health, and wellness. The program was devised to enhance the health and well-being of each employee, and offer healthier alternatives, reducing health issues and medical costs. Harbor Industries' participation in SMUG has enabled them to continue their sustainable business journey with

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a solid strategy for business growth, social care, and environmental conservancy. Through the company's participation in the user group, Harbor was able to review their product materials and processes and evaluate the impacts each had on the business and the environment. Using that information, product designers have successfully transitioned to safer product materials and chemicals, reducing the company's environmental impact.

Results:

- * Reduced natural and greenhouse emissions by 27 percent.
- * Reduced water usage by 46 percent.
- * Reduced electricity usage by 12 percent.
- * Reduced material sent to landfills by 38.7 percent.

Testimonial:

"Our participation in SMUG was critical to the success of Harbor's sustainability efforts. The user group provided the guidance, support, and answers we needed to make impactful changes throughout the company. It has changed the way we do business and manufacture products."

Bob Johnson, Senior Designer